

## Pink slips leave school employees reeling

Karen Massie 2 days ago



Michael Beckner, Florin High School counselor

SACRAMENTO, CA - Teachers were not the only ones who received layoff notices Monday.

March 15 is the deadline for California school districts to issue preliminary layoff notices to employees.

"I received a layoff notice over the weekend and that was hard," sighed Michael Beckner, a counselor at Florin High School.

For almost 30 years he's worked in the Elk Grove Unified School District. Now he's among 1,100 people in the district getting layoff notices.

"I'm not so worried about myself. I'm concerned about the kids," said Beckner.

He sees students with a variety of issues. "We have kids that are dealing with gang issues in their communities and are afraid. We have kids that are dealing with drug and alcohol issues, pregnancy, and suicide," Beckner said. "We have a lot of kids whose parents are losing their jobs. It stresses the kids out and affects their school work."

Beckner wondered why counselors are being laid

off. He pointed out counselors also make sure students are taking the right classes and get college scholarships.

"It's frustrating," said district spokeswoman Liz Graswich. "Over the last two years our district has dealt with \$40 million in budget cuts. Now we're looking at cutting \$60.5 million."

According to Graswich, things will be significantly different come next fall. "Class sizes in K-3 will increase," she said. "We're going to 28 students to one teacher. We're also cutting counselors, librarians, and library technicians. The list is terrible."

Beckner believes high school grads are going to have a tough time when you add in the fact colleges are cutting back and tuition is going higher. "We'll have fewer kids getting college degrees I'm afraid," Beckner said. "We're going to have fewer kids going into technical occupations."

Beckner thinks many students will end up in prison or needing government assistance. "Those are taxpayers' dollars and it would be a lot cheaper to pay for their education now instead of when they need help from the government to make it," he said.

Elk Grove and other California school districts will post the final layoff lists on May 15.

by Karen Massie,

News10/KXTV

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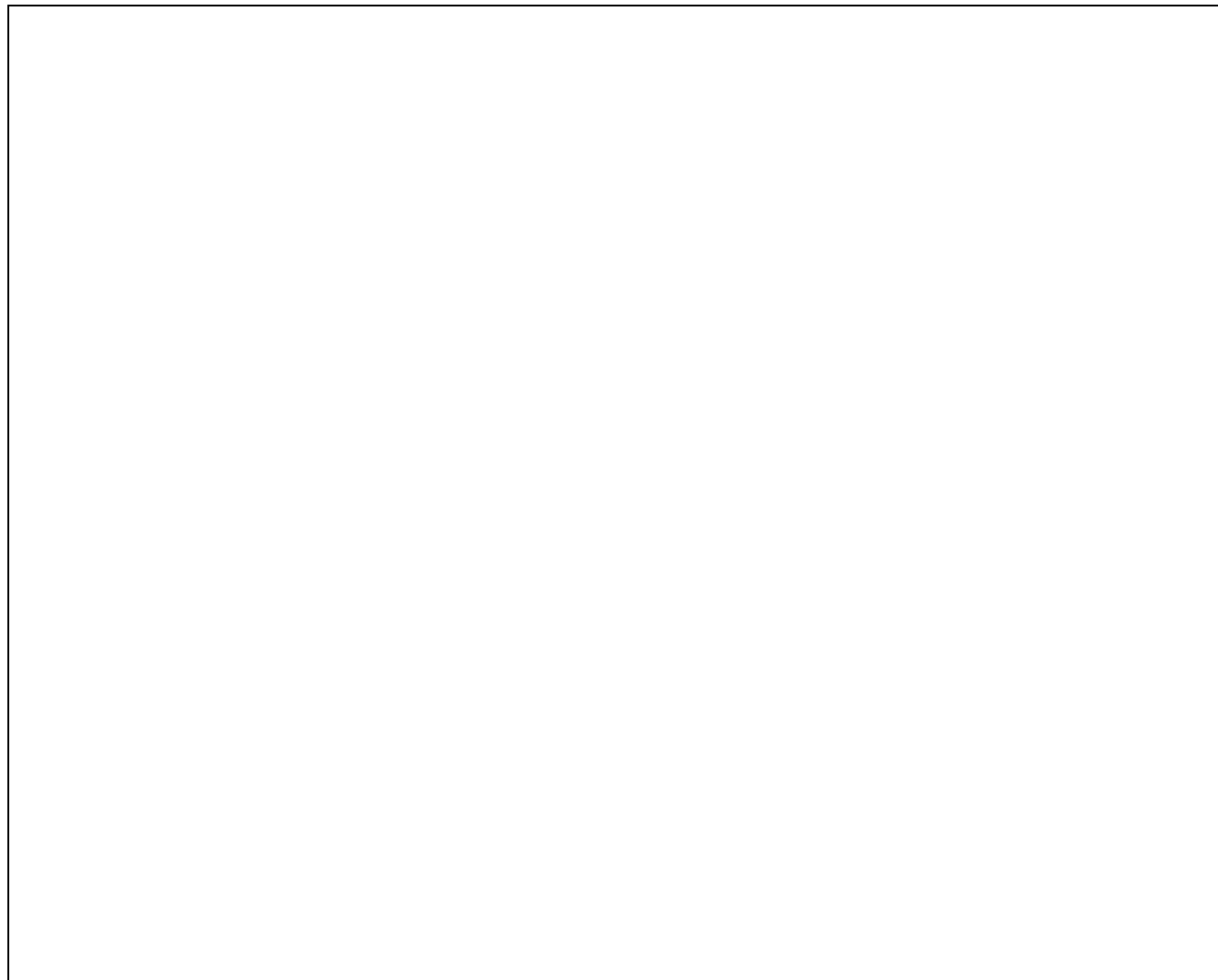
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